

First record of *Sminthopsis psammophila* (Marsupialia: Dasyuridae) from Western Australia

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Abstract

Five specimens, one female and four males, of *Sminthopsis psammophila* Spencer, 1895 were caught at a site in the south-western corner of the Great Victoria Desert (29°58'S, 123°38'E). This discovery considerably increases the known modern range of the species. Previously only five *S. psammophila* have been collected; a single specimen from south-western Northern Territory and four from southern South Australia. The Western Australian animals differ significantly in some skull and external characters from the previous specimens. The habitat of the animals is compared with previous descriptions.

Introduction

Five specimens of *Sminthopsis psammophila* Spencer, 1895 were collected in the Great Victoria Desert within 15 km of 29°58'S, 123°38'E from 19 June to 2 July 1985. Four were caught in drift line pit traps of 160 x 550 mm PVC pipe and one was caught in an Elliott trap (after Biological Surveys Committee 1984). The specimens are lodged in the Western Australian Museum.

Five specimens of this species have previously been collected; one from Lake Amadeus (south-western Northern Territory) in 1895, and four from two sites on the Eyre Peninsula (southern South Australia) in 1969. These specimens have been discussed by Aitken (1971) and Archer (1981). Archer also discusses material from owl deposits of unknown age collected from Ayers Rock, which is near Lake Amadeus.

The new specimens have been examined and compared with published descriptions of the previous specimens.

The specimens

Skull and external measurements (as for Aitken *op. cit.*) are given in Table 1. We are able to compare 23 skull measurements in the four Western Australian males with those of the two males described by Aitken (*op. cit.*). Nineteen of

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